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FM AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3304  
INFO RUCNFUR/DARFUR COLLECTIVE  
RUCNIAD/IGAD COLLECTIVE  
RUEHGG/UN SECURITY COUNCIL COLLECTIVE  
RHMFISS/CJTF HOA

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 KHARTOUM 000384

DEPT FOR AF A A/S CARTER, AF/SPG, AF/E, CA/OCS/ACS/AF, CA/OCS/ACS/CI

NSC FOR MGAVIN AND CHUDSON  
ADDIS ABABA FOR USAU  
DEPT PLS PASS USAID FOR AFR/SUDAN  
AMEMBASSY CAIRO FOR DAVID POTTER AND CHRIS ROWAN  
CA/OCS/ACS/CI FOR KRISTIN KNEEDLER

SENSITIVE  
SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [ASEC](#) [CASC](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KPKO](#) [SOCI](#) [AU](#) [UNSC](#) [SU](#)

SUBJECT: EMBASSY RAISES WITH MFA AMCIT HARASSMENT AND CHILDREN'S  
ISSUES CASES

REF: A) 09 KHARTOUM 00325  
B) 08 KHARTOUM 01772

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¶1. (SBU) On March 18, DCM Asquino and conoff met with Ambassador Ahmed El Tijani, Director General of the Aliens and Borders Department and members of his staff. The Mission requested the meeting, which took the MFA eight days to arrange, to discuss the harassment by Government of Sudan (GOS) officials of Americans working for recently expelled non-government organizations (INGOs). The DCM and conoff also discussed ongoing Children's Issues cases with El-Tijani and requested the MFA's assistance in their resolution.

¶2. (SBU) The DCM said that the Embassy had received numerous complaints from INGO Amcits that their passports had been seized by Humanitarian Affairs Commission (HAC) officials who were carrying out the expulsions. He reminded El Tijani that such passports are the property of the US Government and should not be held by a foreign country. The Amcits had been told that their passports would not be returned until the HAC was satisfied that INGO financial issues have been resolved. (Note: Three Amcits have reported to post that their passports are currently held by HAC: employees of MSF-France (2) and CHF International (1). These Amcits asked that we not, for now, specifically raise their cases in our demarche to the GoS, out of fear of reprisal by HAC. All, however, had no objection to the post raising the seizure of passports as a general issue. End Note.) The DCM asked El Tijani to ensure that all US passports presently held by HAC be returned to Amcits immediately.

¶3. (SBU) DCM Asquino informed El Tijani that many foreigners, including Amcits, have been advised by HAC, directly or indirectly, not to contact their embassies for consular assistance. The DCM emphasized that all citizens have a right to seek such assistance. He urged El Tijani, as head of GOS consular services, to ensure that HAC stop discouraging Amcits from seeking U.S. Embassy consular assistance.

¶4. (SBU) The DCM also raised the issue of the theft of personal property, including computers, cell phones and i-pods, from Amcits by HAC and other GoS officials. Most of these thefts occurred at Nyala Airport on March 5, 2009 as a large number of Amcits and other foreign INGO workers were departing Darfur after their organizations had been expelled from Sudan. El Tijani at first thought that the complaint was about airport thieves who had been responsible for these acts. However, the DCM and conoff made clear that HAC and

GoS officials were guilty of robbing the Amcits. They added that these officials had threatened not to let the Amcits leave unless they handed over their personal property.

15. (SBU) The DCM brought up delays by the MFA in the issuance of GoS residency permits and exit visas - a constant source of headaches for Amcits working in Sudan. The DCM asked that any Amcit who applies for a residency permit or exit visa be issued one in a timely manner, and that those Amcits seeking to depart Sudan be permitted to do so.

16. (SBU) El Tijani said that he would look into each of the issues by following up with HAC and other relevant offices within GoS. He concurred that all foreigners have the right to retain their passports and to contact their Embassies for assistance.

17. (SBU) DCM Asquino and Conoff then discussed with El Tijani two consular cases involving minor Amcits. In the first case, two minor Amcit children, Omar and Nadia Mahmoud, were abducted from the U.S. to Khartoum by their Sudanese father (Reftel B). The MFA has previously advised that it would make arrangements for the Left Behind Parent, Ms. Jennifer McConnell, to visit her children in Khartoum. Ms. McConnell has indicated that she would be willing to travel to Khartoum for such a meeting. The DCM and Conoff asked El Tijani to confirm that Ms. McConnell would be able to visit her children should she travel to Sudan. El Tijani said that the MFA will try to make arrangements with the Taking Parent and advise post accordingly. Post has already advised Ms. McConnell not to travel to Sudan until the MFA provides this assurance. El-Tijani also asked that the post submit a new copy of the Interpol Kidnapping notice for the Taking Parent with a note verbal. Post has already twice provided the Interpol notice to the MFA and will submit it again as requested.

18. (SBU) DCM, Conoff, and El Tijani also discussed the case of

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Sabreen Rasheed, an Amcit mother of seven Amcit children who has been unable to depart Sudan because permission from the children's father is required for issuance of their exit visas. Conoff has advised Ms. Rasheed, based on post's consultations with the MFA, that she should retain a lawyer to pursue custody of the children in Sudanese family court to allow them to depart legally from Sudan. Ms. Rasheed's mother and brother are now in Khartoum to assist her with the children while she attempts to begin legal procedures to seek custody.

19. (SBU) Comment: El Tijani and the two members of his staff attending the meeting listened intently and took notes on each of the Amcit harassment issues raised. While El Tijani said he would look into each, he was non-committal on specific actions he would take or a timeframe for resolution. He appeared more forthcoming on the two Children's Issues cases. He said in the first case his office would do everything it could to facilitate issuance of a visa for the Amcit mother to travel to Sudan. He also asked one of his assistants to call the Sudanese father to encourage him to allow his former wife to visit the children, underscoring that "this is her right." Although he appeared well-versed on details of the second case involving Ms. Rasheed, he was less specific on assistance his office might provide.

FERNANDEZ